BATMAN
THE NEW ADVENTURES
75¢
410
AUG. 87
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BY COLLINS, COCKRUM & DeCARLO

FOR SIX MONTHS NOW, A CAVERN BENEATH A MILLIONAIRE'S MANSION HAS HOUSED A SCHOOL -- A SCHOOL WITH A SINGLE PUPIL, UNDERGOING A VIGOROUS, RIGOROUS TRAINING PROGRAM.
6-31/24
SIX MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE BATMAN TOOK STREET KID JASON TODD UNDER HIS WING; SIX MONTHS FILLED WITH GRUELING PHYSICAL TRAINING.
BUT THESE SIX MONTHS OF TRAINING HAVE TAKEN SOME MYSTERIOUS TWISTS AND TURNS.
CONSIDER A TEACHER WHO THRIVES UPON HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT WHILE INSISTING THAT "VIOLENCE" IS MERELY A TOOL, TO BE USED "JUDICIOUSLY AND WITHOUT JOY"...
TWO OF A KIND

MAX COLLINS WRITER | DAVE COCKRUM PENCILLER | MIKE DECARLO INKER | TODD KLEIN E JOHN COSTANZA LETTERERS | ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST | DENNY O'NEIL EDITOR

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NICE WORK, SON.
CONSIDER A TEACHER WHO REQUIRES SKILLS BE DEVELOPED EVEN WITH WEAPONS THAT THAT VERY TEACHER SCORNS...
BUT THERE IS DEMYSTIFICATION, TOO, IN THESE SIX MONTHS OF TRAINING, AS A COWLED MR. WIZARD TURNS A HIGH-TECH CRIME LAB INTO A KID'S COMFORTABLE SECOND HOME:
FOR THERE ARE MENTAL AS WELL AS PHYSICAL WORKOUTS HERE, AS A FIFTH-GRADE DROPOUT LEARNS TO MASTER COMPUTER SCIENCE -- AND MUCH ELSE.
2

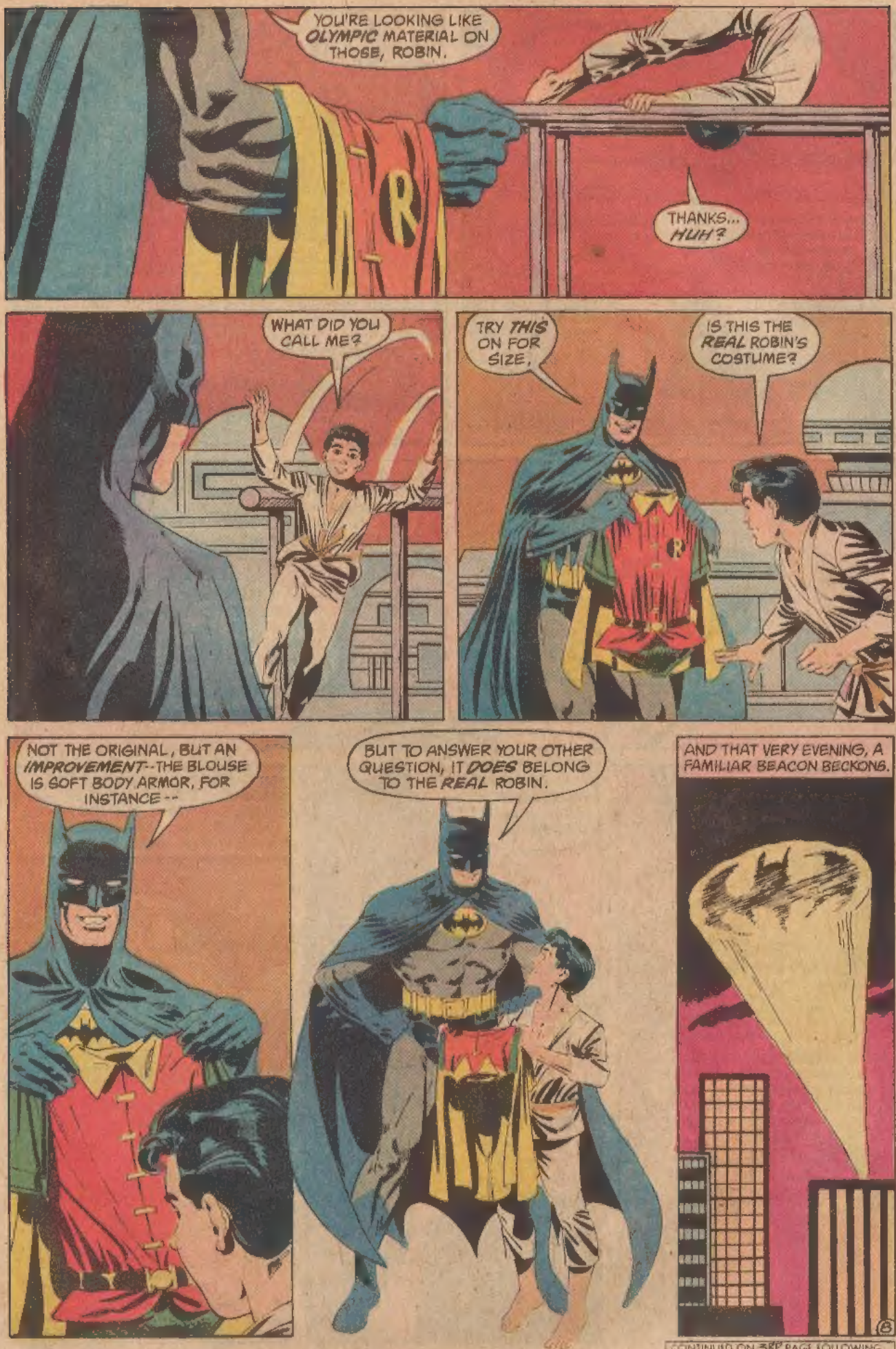
WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THE KING-SIZE COIN, ANYWAY? I MEAN, I HEARD OF INFLATION, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS.
LIBERTY
1947
A "CERTAIN PARTY"...YOU MEAN TWO-FACE, DON'T YOU? ISN'T THAT THING A GIANT REPLICA OF THE COIN THAT LOON'S ALWAYS FLIPPIN'?
WELL... YES ON BOTH COUNTS.
JUST A LITTLE MEMENTO, JASON -- A CERTAIN PARTY TRIED TO CRUSH ROBIN AND ME UNDER IT...BUT WE DOUBLE CROSSED HIM.
MR. WAYNE, WE BEEN GOIN' OVER YOUR ROGUES' GALLERY FOR MONTHS NOW... TILL MY HEAD'S SWIMMIN' WITH CRIME STATISTICS AND UGLY MUGS...
JOKER

"AND I HEARD PLENTY OF WAR STORIES ABOUT HOW YOU AND ROBIN MADE SUCKERS OUTA THESE WOULD-BE MASTERMINDS--"
--BUT YOU NEVER MENTIONED TWO-FACE-- WE NEVER WENT OVER HIS FILE... WHY?
"YES I DO--AND YOU SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH TWO-FACE'S CASE...HE IS STILL AT LARGE, AND HE'S A DANGEROUS AND DEMENTED OPPONENT--"
OH, NO SPECIAL REASON-- JUST AN OVERSIGHT...
WELL, FILL ME IN, THEN. YOU WANT MY EDUCATION TO BE COMPLETE, DON'T YA?
TWO-FACE IS A TRAGIC VILLAIN--GREED ISN'T THE ROOT OF HIS EVIL...HE'S MOTIVATED BY MADNESS IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD...
"HIS REAL NAME IS HARVEY DENT--HE WAS, NOT SO LONG AGO, THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY OF GOTHAM CITY... A HIGH OFFICE HE SERVED HONORABLY. HE AND I WERE FRIENDS--ALLIES."
4
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

"DENT WAS THE YOUNGEST D.A. IN THE CITY'S HISTORY, AND NO PRIOR PROSECUTOR REMOTELY RIVALLED HIS CONVICTION RECORD--"
ISN'T THIS YOUR LUCKY COIN?
"THE D.A. TOOK ON UNDERWORLD FIGURES WHO'D GONE UNTOUCHED UNDER THE CORRUPT ADMINISTRATION THAT PRECEDED HIM...THOUGH CRITICS DISMISSED HIM AS VAIN AND AMBITIOUS--"
IT WAS FOUND AT THE MURDER SCENE!
GET AWAY FROM ME!
"FEW WITNESSES COULD STAND UP UNDER DENT'S CORROSIVE CROSS-EXAMINATION--AND FINALLY ONE STRUCK BACK WITH HIS OWN ACID TEST--
"SUDDENLY THE HANDSOME YOUNG PROSECUTOR, WHOSE POLITICAL FUTURE HAD SEEMED SO BRIGHT, WAS A HIDEOUSLY DISFIGURED SELF-PARODY."
WHAT ABOUT PLASTIC SURGERY?
PERHAPS A SERIES OF OPERATIONS, OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS, WOULD HAVE GRADUALLY IMPROVED HIS CONDITION--.
TWO-FACE
"--BUT DENT'S SCARS RAN DEEPER THAN THAT. AND HE BECAME OBSESSED WITH THAT GANGSTER'S 'LUCKY' SILVER DOLLAR."
TWO FACES--BOTH AS PERFECT AS MINE ONCE WAS.
5

"HE CARVED A CRUDE CROSS ON ONE SIDE OF THE COIN--IN HIS MIND, THE PRISTINE SIDE REPRESENTED GOOD, AND THE SCARRED SIDE EVIL.
"AND, SO, HE FLIPPED IT--
"--AND WHEN THE COIN LANDED MARRED SIDE UP, HE MADE A DECISION--"
EVIL WON--HE MADE CRIME HIS LIFE'S WORK!
YES--BUT HE FREQUENTLY FLIPS THAT SAME COIN TO DECIDE WHETHER TO COMMIT A CRIME OR NOT!
"HOW CAN YOU DEAL WITH A GUY THAT UNPREDICTABLE?"
"ACTUALLY, JASON, HE'S VERY PREDICTABLE--HIS M.O. IS THE MOST SPECIFIC IN OUR FILES--"
DOUBLE FEAT
ROCK AND ROCKY
TWO-FACE ALWAYS COMMITS CRIMES BASED SOMEHOW ON THE NUMBER TWO.
THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE MUCH TO GO ON!
A LOT OF TIMES I DIDN'T SEE THE PATTERN RIGHT AWAY--BUT ROBIN COULD ALWAYS PICK UP ON IT.
YEAH, SURE--LOOK... YOU, UH, HIT THE SHOWERS IF YOU LIKE--I'M GONNA WORK OUT ON THE BARS.
6

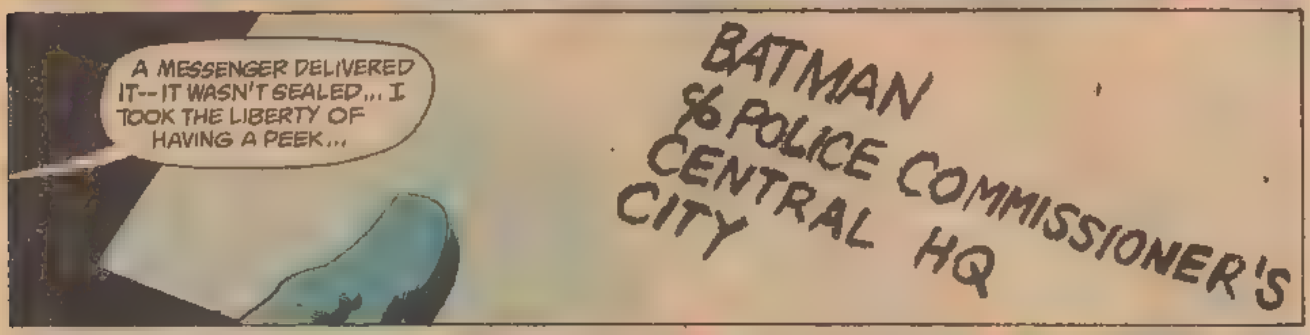
I SEE YOU FINALLY TOLD THE BOY ABOUT TWO-FACE.
YES--BUT NOT THE WHOLE STORY--
"NOT THAT HIS OWN FATHER WAS A FLUNKY FOR TWO-FACE, WHO IS BELIEVED TO HAVE MURDERED WILLIS TODD, AFTER TODD CROSSED HIM..."
YOU'RE PROTECTING THE BOY... AND YET YOU PLAN TO MAKE HIM YOUR NEW PARTNER, AFTER YOU SWORE YOU WOULD NOT ENDANGER ANOTHER CHILD.
ALFRED, THIS "CHILD" IS ALREADY A STREETWISE ADVENTURER--WHO LEFT TO HIS OWN DEVICES WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY GO DOWN THE SAME CRIMINAL ROAD THAT TOOK HIS FATHER TO AN EARLY DEATH.
I INTEND TO CHANNEL THE SKILLS JASON BROUGHT WITH HIM, COMBINED WITH WHAT I'VE TAUGHT HIM, TO SEND HIM DOWN THE RIGHT PATH...
AND YOU MUST ADMIT HE IS MAKING PROGRESS...
YES INDEED--BUT IF I MIGHT BE FRANK, SIR...
"...YOU'RE MAKING RATHER TOO FREQUENT MENTION OF THE OTHER ROBIN--DON'T YOU THINK? PLACING THE LAD'S PREDECESSOR IN THE WAY OF THAT PATH?"
7


YOU'RE LOOKING LIKE OLYMPIC MATERIAL ON THOSE, ROBIN.
THANKS... HUH?
WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?
TRY THIS ON FOR SIZE.
IS THIS THE REAL ROBIN'S COSTUME?
NOT THE ORIGINAL, BUT AN IMPROVEMENT--THE BLOUSE IS SOFT BODY ARMOR, FOR INSTANCE --
BUT TO ANSWER YOUR OTHER QUESTION, IT DOES BELONG TO THE REAL ROBIN.
AND THAT VERY EVENING, A FAMILIAR BEACON BECKONS.
8

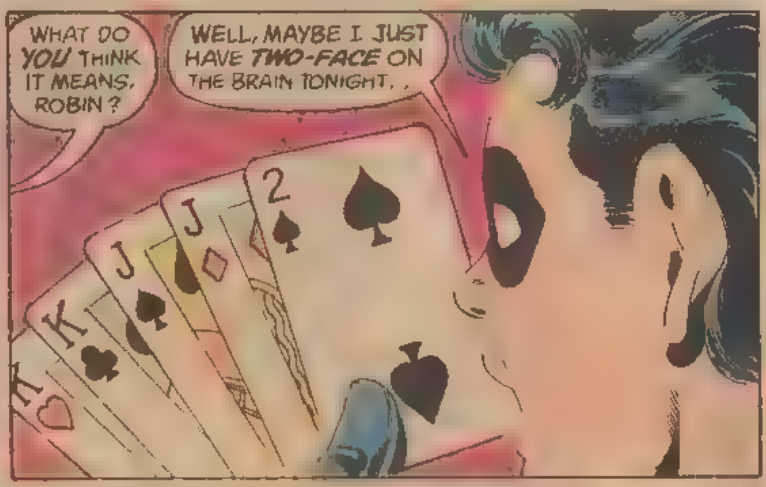
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

BATMAN! HOW DID YOU GET HERE SO FAST?
WE WERE ON OUR WAY HERE ALREADY.
WE?
YES--THERE'S SOMEONE I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET--
ROBIN?
ROBIN.
THAT'S ME, I GUESS...
YOU SWORE YOU'D NEVER PAIR UP WITH A CHILD AGAIN.
THIS CHILD IS OLDER THAN BOTH OF US--NOT TO MENTION TOUGHER.
WELCOME, ROBIN. GOOD LUCK TO YOU, SON.
THANKS, COMMISSIONER.

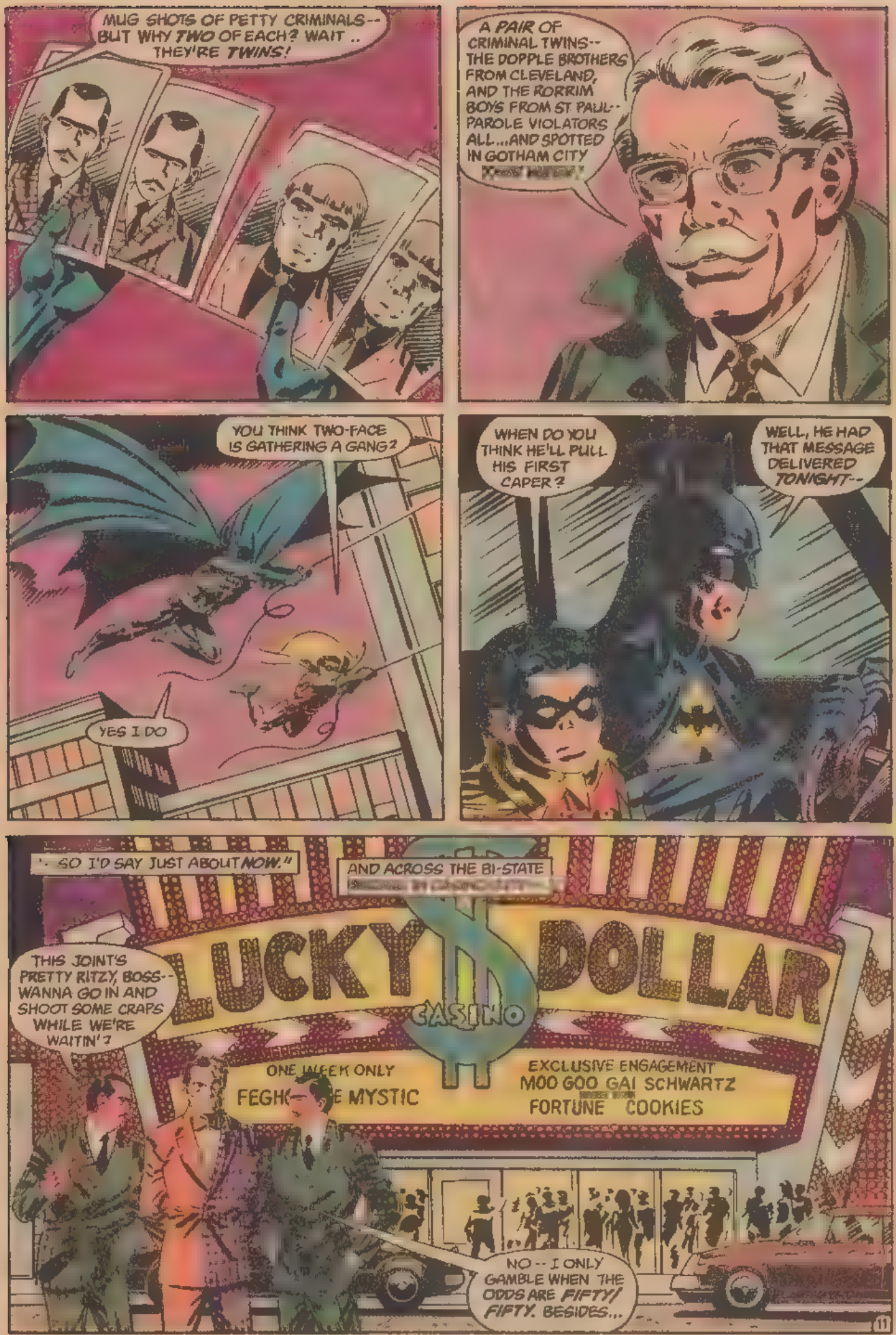
NOW, WHY THE BAT-SIGNAL? SO FAR IT'S BEEN A QUIET NIGHT OUT THERE -
LET'S HOPE IT STAYS THAT WAY - TAKE A LOOK AT THIS...


A MESSENGER DELIVERED IT-- IT WASN'T SEALED... I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF HAVING A PEEK...
BATMAN & POLICE COMMISSIONER'S CENTRAL HQ CITY

PLAYING CARDS! SPECIFICALLY.
A HAND OF POKER! BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

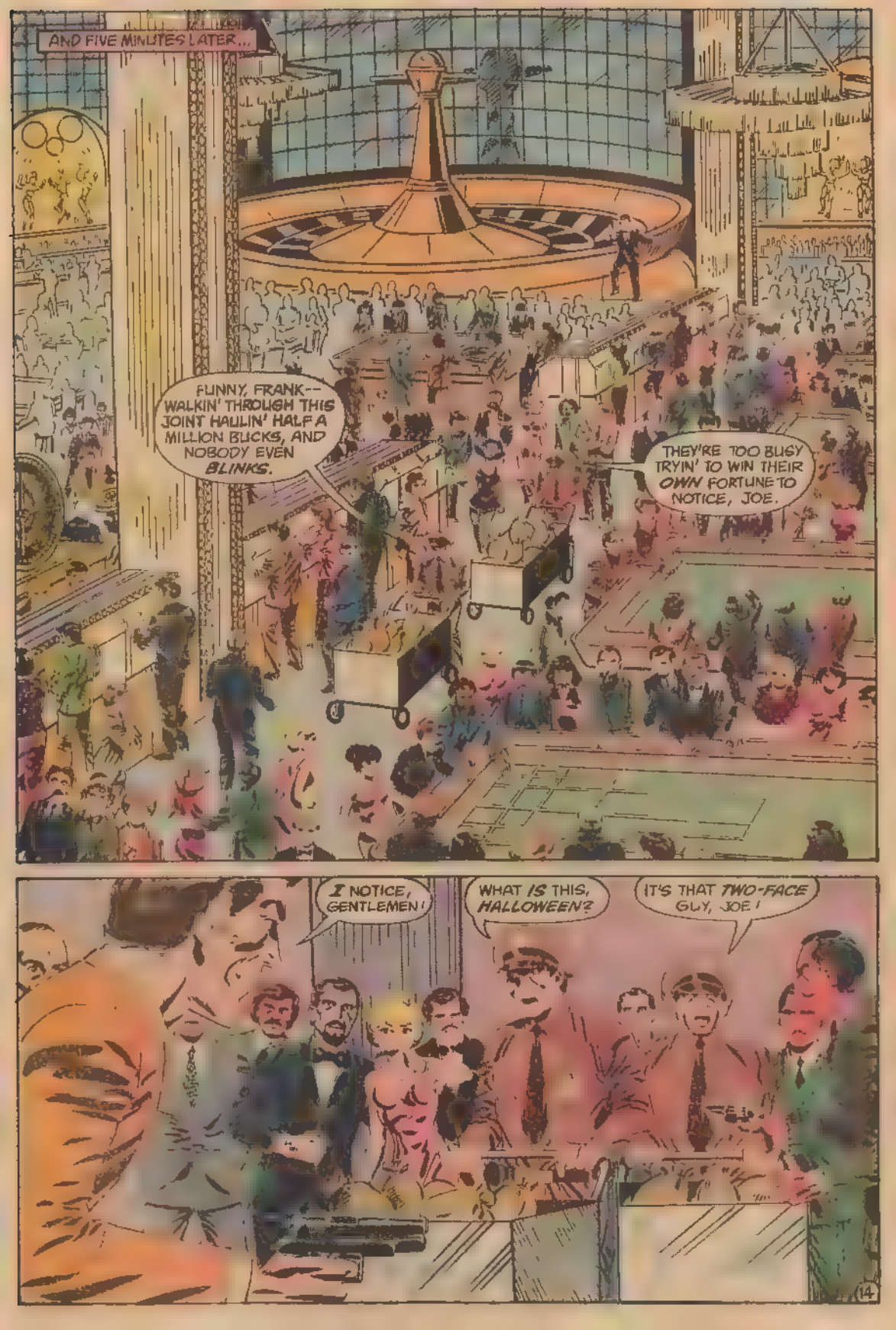

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS, ROBIN?
WELL, MAYBE I JUST HAVE TWO-FACE ON THE BRAIN TONIGHT..

...BUT I'D SAY THE FORMER D.A. IS ANNOUNCING HIS INTENTION TO GET BACK IN THE GAME.
TWO PAIR. YOU COULD BE RIGHT.
I'M ALMOST SURE HE'S RIGHT CHECK THESE OUT.


MUG SHOTS OF PETTY CRIMINALS-- BUT WHY TWO OF EACH? WAIT .. THEY'RE TWINS!
A PAIR OF CRIMINAL TWINS-- THE DOPPLE BROTHERS FROM CLEVELAND, AND THE RORRIM BOYS FROM ST PAUL-- PAROLE VIOLATORS ALL...AND SPOTTED IN GOTHAM CITY
YOU THINK TWO-FACE IS GATHERING A GANG?
YES I DO
WHEN DO YOU THINK HE'LL PULL HIS FIRST CAPER?
WELL, HE HAD THAT MESSAGE DELIVERED TONIGHT--
"-- SO I'D SAY JUST ABOUT NOW."
AND ACROSS THE BI-STATE
LUCKY DOLLAR CASINO
ONE WEEK ONLY
MYSTIC
EXCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT
MOO GOO GAI SCHWARTZ
FORTUNE COOKIES
THIS JOINT'S PRETTY RITZY, BOSS-- WANNA GO IN AND SHOOT SOME CRAPS WHILE WE'RE WAITIN'?
NO -- I ONLY GAMBLE WHEN THE ODDS ARE FIFTY/FIFTY. BESIDES...

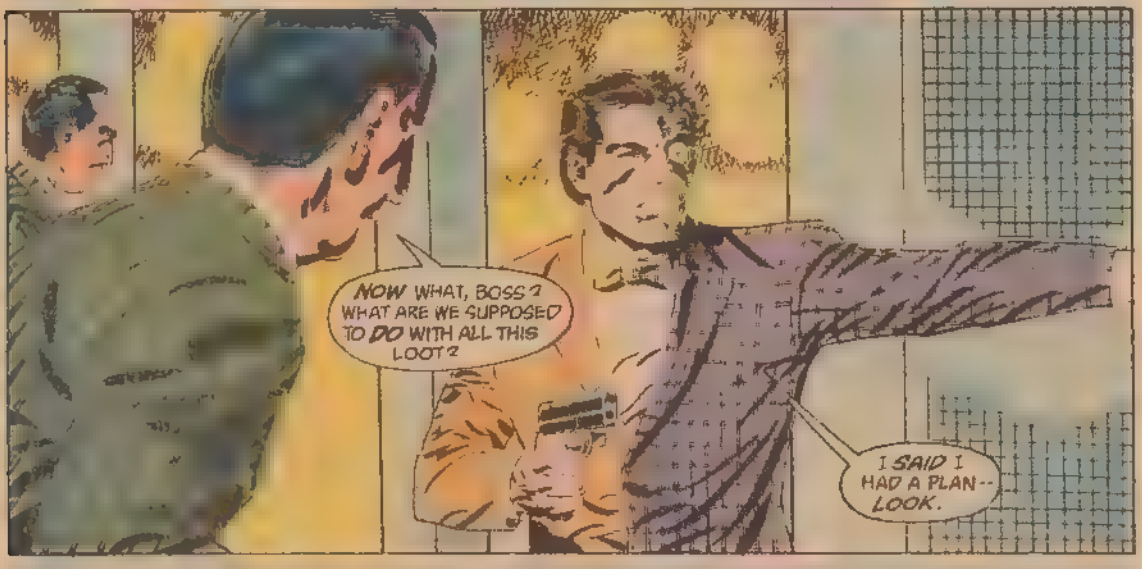
THE ARMORED CAR APPROACHES--
GEEZ, BOSS -- I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THOSE TRUCKS MADE NIGHT DELIVERIES.
FRINKS
ARMORED CAR SERVICE
THEY'RE NOT DELIVERING, YOU IMBECILE! THEY'RE PICKING UP.
"THIS IS A BUSY SEASON FOR THE CASINOS - THEIR CASH OVERFLOW GETS TO BE TOO MUCH"
WELL, WHEN'S THE BEST TIME TO HIT 'EM -- WHEN THEY COME OUT AND LOAD UP THEIR TRUCK?
I'M NOT EVEN SURE WE'RE GOING TO HIT THEM!
THAT, GENTLEMEN, IS UP TO MY LUCKY COIN --
12

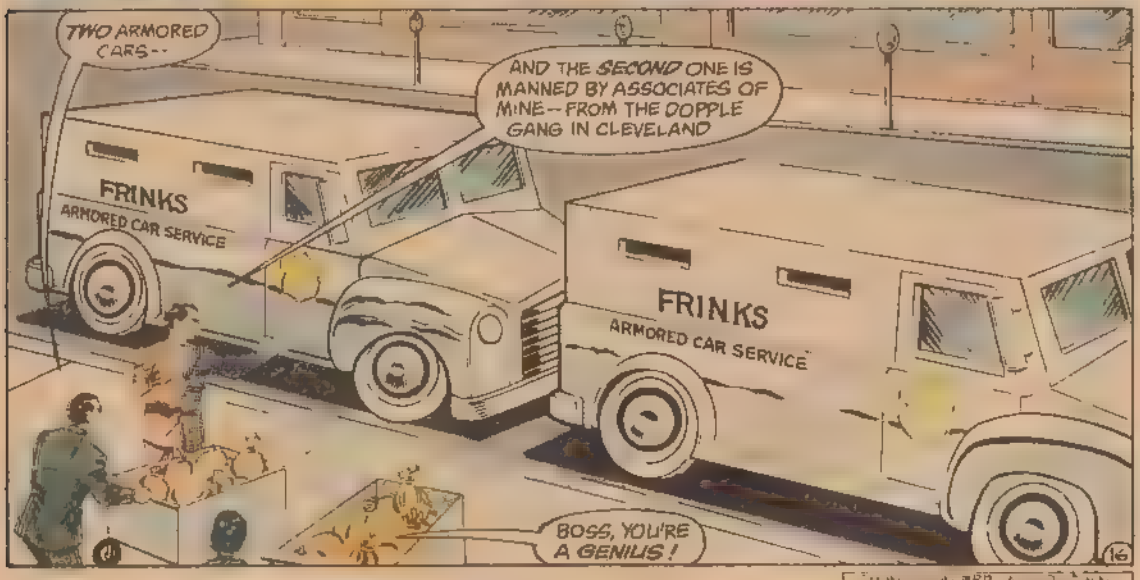
EVIL WINS!
THAT MEANS WE DO IT?
THAT MEANS WE DO IT
SO WE CASE THE PLACE TONIGHT, AND COME BACK TOMORROW AND
NO!
WE DO IT NOW-- HERE'S THE PLAN
"RIGHT NOW THOSE GUARDS WILL BE WALKING THROUGH THE CROWDED CASINO--BUT IN FIVE MINUTES THEY'LL BE WALKING OUT--"
WHEELING CARTS OF MONEY
THAT'S THE PLAN?!?
BUT BOSS THEY'RE ARMED-- AND SO IS THE SECURITY FORCE IN THERE!
YES, THEY'RE ARMED--IN A CROWDED CASINO WHERE THEY DARE NOT FIRE THEIR WEAPONS--A COMPUNCTION WE DO NOT SHARE.
13


AND FIVE MINUTES LATER...
FUNNY, FRANK--WALKIN' THROUGH THIS JOINT HAULIN' HALF A MILLION BUCKS, AND NOBODY EVEN BLINKS.
THEY'RE TOO BUSY TRYIN' TO WIN THEIR OWN FORTUNE TO NOTICE, JOE.
I NOTICE, GENTLEMEN!
WHAT IS THIS, HALLOWEEN?
IT'S THAT TWO-FACE GUY, JOE!

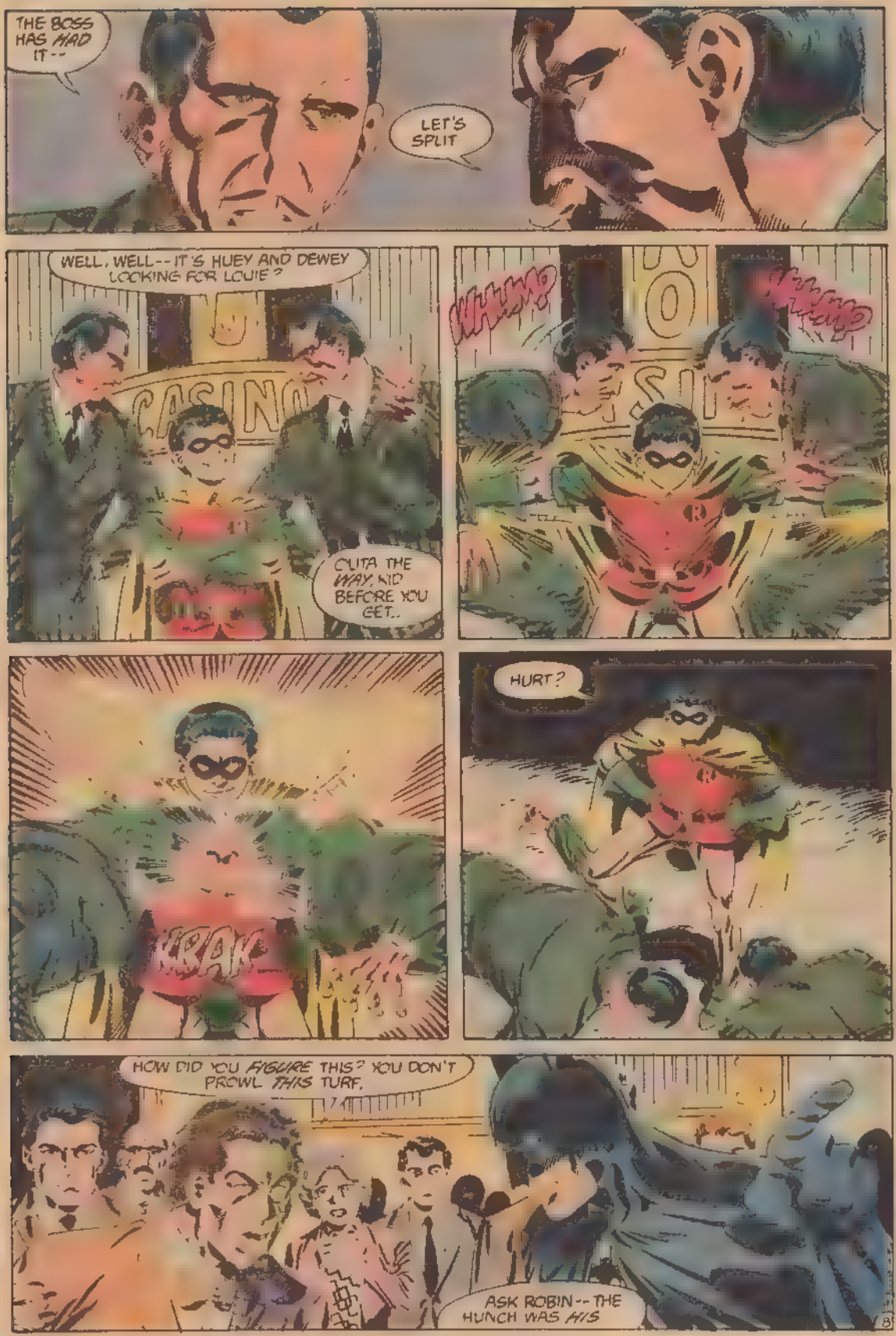
WHAT ARE YOU, NUTS? THERE'S ARMED SECURITY PEOPLE ALL OVER THE PLACE!
NOT AS MANY "ARMED SECURITY PEOPLE" AS UNARMED CASINO PATRONS--NOW, TURN BOTH YOUR CARTS OVER TO MY BOYS.
NO WAY, UGLY--YOU'RE SURROUNDED! LOOK AROUND YOU!
KA-BLAM! KA-BLAM!
JOE!
YOU KNOW WHERE THE FRONT DOOR IS, BOYS.
THAT WAS COLD, BOSS!
SHUT UP! YOU WANT HIM TO FLIP THAT COIN AGAIN?!?
15

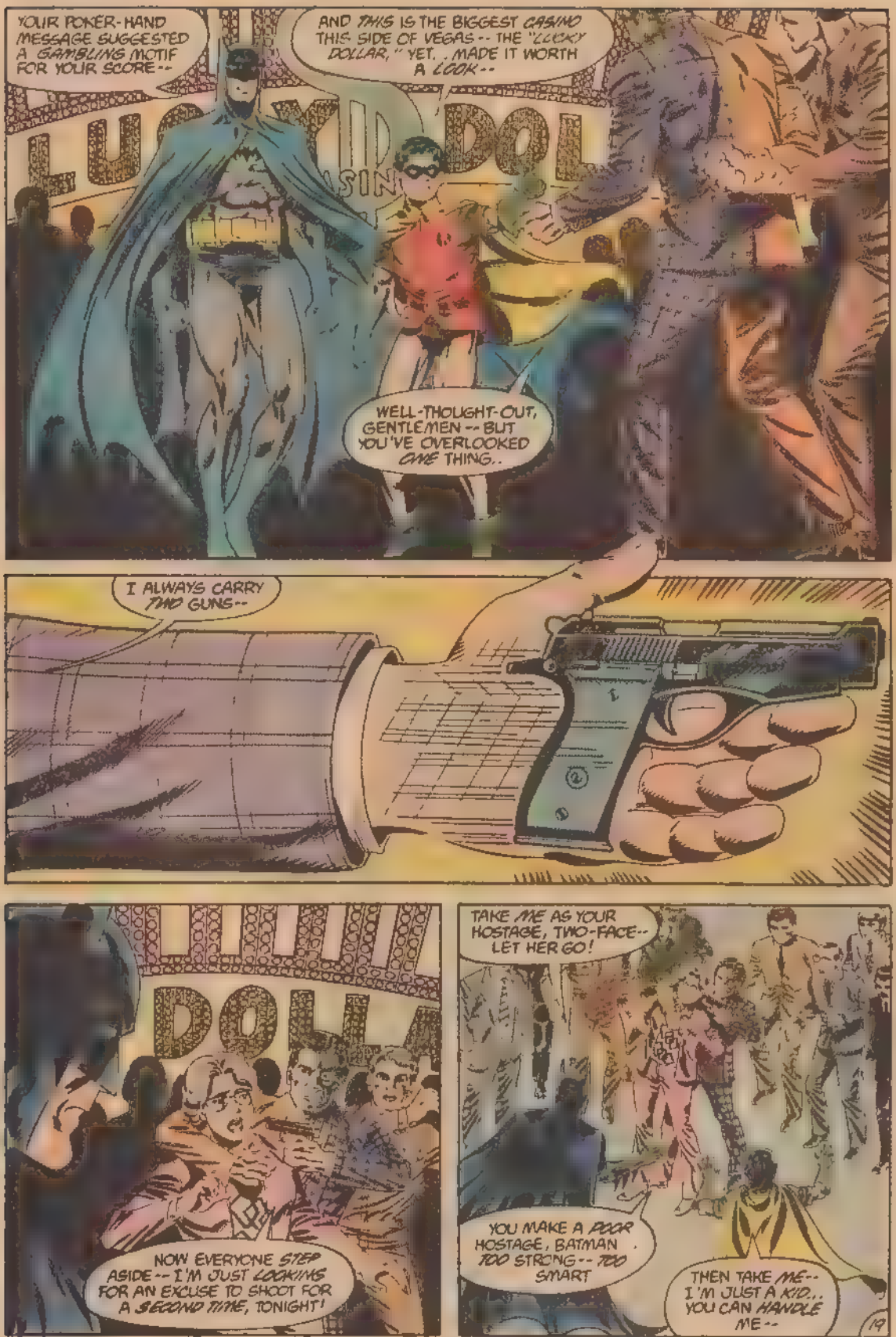
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, TWO-FACE--
STEP ASIDE, OR I'LL FIRE INTO THE CROWD--AND IF YOU THINK I WON'T, YOU'RE THE MOST RECKLESS GAMBLER HERE


NOW WHAT, BOSS? WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH ALL THIS LOOT?
I SAID I HAD A PLAN--LOOK.


TWO ARMORED CARS--
AND THE SECOND ONE IS MANNED BY ASSOCIATES OF MINE--FROM THE DOPPLE GANG IN CLEVELAND
FRINKS
ARMORED CAR SERVICE
FRINKS
ARMORED CAR SERVICE
BOSS, YOU'RE A GENIUS!

IT'S TIME-- OPEN UP--
KNOCK KNOCK
WELL--TWO-FACE! GLAD YOU STOPPED BY WE'RE ALMOST DONE IN HERE
WISH WE COULD HAVE GOTTEN HERE SOONER--
WHAK
YOU KNOW, THE TRULY TOUGH INDIVIDUAL DOES NOT NEED THE CRUTCH OF A FIREARM--HE CAN STAND ON HIS OWN...
...TWO FEET!
BETTER THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU GO FOR THAT GUN TWO-FACE--
17


THE BOSS HAS HAD IT --
LET'S SPLIT
WELL, WELL -- IT'S HUEY AND DEWEY LOOKING FOR LOUIE?
CUTA THE WAY, KID BEFORE YOU GET..
WHAM
WHAM
KRAK
HURT?
HOW DID YOU FIGURE THIS? YOU DON'T PROWL THIS TURF.
ASK ROBIN -- THE HUNCH WAS HIS


YOUR POKER-HAND MESSAGE SUGGESTED A GAMBLING MOTIF FOR YOUR SCORE--
AND THIS IS THE BIGGEST CASINO THIS SIDE OF VEGAS -- THE "LUCKY DOLLAR," YET. . MADE IT WORTH A LOOK--
WELL-THOUGHT-OUT, GENTLEMEN -- BUT YOU'VE OVERLOOKED ONE THING..
I ALWAYS CARRY TWO GUNS--
NOW EVERYONE STEP ASIDE -- I'M JUST LOOKING FOR AN EXCUSE TO SHOOT FOR A SECOND TIME, TONIGHT!
TAKE ME AS YOUR HOSTAGE, TWO-FACE-- LET HER GO!
YOU MAKE A POOR HOSTAGE, BATMAN . TOO STRONG -- TOO SMART
THEN TAKE ME-- I'M JUST A KID.. YOU CAN HANDLE ME--
19

BESIDES--THINK OF THE POWER YOU'D HAVE OVER BATMAN--
AND BETTER STILL--I'M THE SECOND ROBIN--THINK OF IT! IT'S SO FITTING--
YES--IT'S ALMOST TOO IRONIC--
CLEAR A PATH FOR ME, BATMAN--I'VE GOT THE PERFECT HOSTAGE, NOW... AND IF YOU OR THE COPS FOLLOW US, I'LL PUT TWO BULLETS IN HIS RED BREAST.
MOMENTS LATER IN A NEARBY ALLEYWAY--
HERE'S MY CUSTOMIZED TWO-DOOR--HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?
IT'S TOO MUCH.
NOW I MUST WARN YOU--I'M NOT A NICE MAN... IF YOU TRY ANYTHING AT ALL, YOU'RE A DEAD BIRD...
I UNDERSTAND, LIKE YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO HIT THE BRAKES OR ANYTHING.
HUH?
20

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

SCREEEEECH
THAT CUNNING BRAT! I'LL KILL HIM FOR THIS...
BUT NOT TONIGHT.
ROBIN! THANK GOD--
THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE BATMOBILE.
I COMMANDEERED A CIVILIAN CAR--IF TWO-FACE HAD SPOTTED THE BATMOBILE IN HIS REAR-VIEW MIRROR, WELL... ANYWAY, COME ALONG THERE'S WORK TO DO--
LATER...
MASTER JASON DID WELL. . .ALMOST AS WELL AS DICK. SPEAKING OF MASTER DICK--
HE'S IN NEW YORK. MAYBE WE'LL TALK...AFTER THINGS HAVE COOLED OFF A BIT.
21

HAVE THE STATE POLICE FOUND TWO-FACE--?
NOT YET. THEY'RE NOT HAVING ANY BETTER LUCK TRACKING HIM THAN WE DID.
WE'LL GET THAT LUNATIC, BATMAN!

YES WE WILL--BUT THAT HOSTAGE EXCHANGE TONIGHT WAS FOOLHARDY.
DID I FLUNK THE TEST?

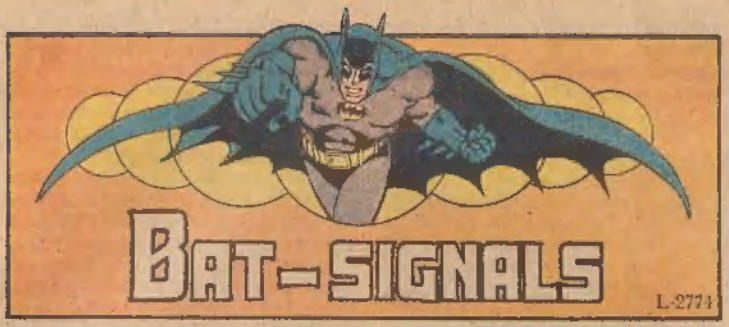
HARDLY. THE OTHER ROBIN WOULD'VE DONE THE SAME THING...
...YOU REALLY ARE TWO OF A KIND.

THANK YOU, MR. WAYNE. MIND IF I STAY UP AWHILE AND DO SOME HOMEWORK?

GO AHEAD--YOU'RE BOUND TO BE A LITTLE WIRED AFTER ALL THAT... BUT DO GET SOME REST. AND IT'S "BRUCE," OKAY?
OKAY, BRUCE.

HARVEY DENT
A.K.A.
TWO-FACE
-
CRIMINAL HISTORY
NOW--I'M GOING TO GET TO KNOW YOU, PAL--

WILLIS TODD
PETTY CRIMINAL
PRESUMED DEAD
TWO-FACE BELIEVED RESPONSIBLE
FOR FURTHER INFO PRESS RETURN
TO BE CONTINUED



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Dear Sirs,

I urge you to give Detective Essen her own book drawn by David Mazzucchelli. If you do, I promise I'll buy it. Three cheers for both of them.

Perry Whittle
621 Lincoln Way #8
San Francisco, CA 94122

(Hooray!)

*****

Dear Denny,

I am really enjoying BATMAN: YEAR ONE. Once again, Frank Miller demonstrates his ability to view an old and established character in a new and different light. The thing I like most about Miller's Batman is that he's fallible; it's natural that our hero should make mistakes just as he's starting to learn the business.

Jim Gordon is fallible too, as his increasing attraction to Sergeant Essen shows. I love the gritty realism of the series, from the widespread corruption of the Gotham City government to the naturalistic depiction of Batman's costume (looks just like Adam West, doesn't he?).

How are the art chores on the book divided up? Does Miller do layouts or roughs? In any case, I'm extremely impressed with David Mazzucchelli. Unlike the work of other artists (including that of Frank Miller, I'm sorry to admit), Mazzucchelli's is not preoccupied with effect. Every line in his work serves to enhance the story. Page design, layout and continuity are all excellent.

I have Part 3 (issue #406) in my hands now and am looking forward (with a combination of eagerness and regret) to the conclusion of the mini-series. Only get rid of Holly, willya? I can't stand the way she talks.

Why wasn't YEAR ONE done outside the BATMAN title as a separate mini-series?

Robert L. Moore
3630 Gladwyn Ave.
Pennsauken, NJ 08109

YEAR ONE was deliberately put into BATMAN's run to establish a "Everything starts fresh here" milestone.

The art on YEAR ONE is completely David Mazzucchelli's work. Frank did the script only.

*****

Dear Mr. O'Neil,

YEAR ONE. I'm shaken and awed. Frank Miller's writing is "Instant Legend—just add artwork." Mr. Mazzucchelli's artwork is so good here in its starkness and simplicity, that I'm having trouble imagining him drawing anything less somber. Ms. Lewis' coloring is great. The evident apoplexy of Loeb, the shadows and the black and violet of Batman made the feelings all more grim.

I'm not ready for the Joker yet. I want to spend more time with these people you've made me care so much about: the struggling Gordon family, Selina/Catwoman and Holly.

I hope you keep the twisted Bat logo. Can't wait for YEAR TWO over at DETECTIVE.

Charlie Harris
2657 N. Mountain
Tucson, AZ 85719-3140

*****

Dear People,

This letter is mainly to thank Frank and Dave for YEAR ONE. We're up to chapter 3 now: Black Dawn.

Frank's writing has been strongly and positively influenced by the work he's put out this last year, not only on DARK KNIGHT but also ... ah ... another pointy-eared (well, horned) friend and his ex(?)-lady.

The textural fabric of the script works well with Dave's pencils, now as simple in line and as rich in feel as it's ever been. His lines always seem to have been drawn very slowly. There's a vulnerable naivete there somewhere, along with a fleshy solidity.

I admire the way the two work together—the bits I could niggle at are outweighed by the good parts, and it's only my first letter to a magazine, so...

Look after yourself.

Harish Pathy
College Hall, Knighton Rd.
Leicester LE2 3TR
United Kingdom

It's O.K., Harish—We can say Daredevil, *and Frank and Dave certainly did lovely work there, too.*

*****

Dear DC,

I thought BATMAN #406 was the best comic book out of YEAR ONE I have read so far. The artwork looked like the artwork from the Golden Age. The story was good, really good. Keep up the good work.

Amir S. Steinberg
No Address Given

******

Dear Mr. O'Neil,

Let me just say that I don't envy Max Collins and Chris Warner. I wouldn't want to have to produce the issue after Miller and Mazzucchelli's *Batman: Year One*.

I am in awe of the great care and planning that seems to go into each word and brushstroke on these books. "Perfection" is the only term that I can find to describe the series.

Selina and Holly are terrific characters—as is Essen. In fact, the subtle, three issue build-up to the new origin of Catwoman is the most refreshing approach I've seen in years.

I'm babbling. I just wish this wasn't a mini-series.

Nothing personal, Max and Chris. Really.

Kirk Chrittton
2012 W. Ash M-10
Columbia, MO 65203

*****

Dear People,

Anaconda venom. Right. I guess I'll have to be careful of the dreaded Coral Constrictor snake. Enough of this. I forgive you your mistake. After all, the rest of the book was great.

Batman should use gadgets, he always has, but let's stay in character. The sonic device for bats is too reminiscent of the much-maligned TV show.

On Catwoman. You've made her a dominatrix. Very reasonable. Much more likely than a victim of amnesia or a thrill-seeking abused wife. It explains her choice of costume, combat skill and her fondness for the cat o' nine tails. My point is that since she's not too fond of men, she might be a lesbian. I don't mean to make a guess, not having all the facts; I'm just telling you what it looks like so far.

The book's fine, a real gem. Keep experimenting and being innovative. We'll let you know if we like it, but don't pander to the masses. I like a book that takes chances.

Robin Scott Lane
116 Shady Lawn
Rantool, IL 61666

*****

Dear DC,

I was a true Marvel fan. I collected one of their main titles. Let's just say he slung webs. I had almost the whole collection, but after reading some of your new stuff, I sold them all so I'd have the money to buy and collect your comics. Now I have

ordered 10 JUSTICE LEAGUE #1's, and have gotten all the new SUPERMAN, SHAZAM!, BATMAN: YEAR ONE and FLASH titles. I am also one of the luckier kids who have a DARK KNIGHT hardcover. I'm age 15 and I didn't grow up watching the Autobots. I grew up with the *Super-Friends* and *Batman and Robin*. The Legends of our time. Thank you all for showing me "DC still does it better!"

Michael Hatt
5425 Isle Circle
Charleston, SC 29418

*****

Dear Dark Ones,
Re: BATMAN #406

The sense of realism in BATMAN: YEAR ONE is astonishing. David Mazzucchelli (who I thought rolled on *Daredevil*) puts the character in a rugged, realistic form. There isn't extreme emphasis on muscles, because in real life you couldn't see every muscle through the costume. What I'm getting at is your creative team on this book, so far, tears me away from the "kiss-up-to-the-kids" plot expressed in so many of the other comics that I've read. If you can do what you're doing with this book to other books, then I believe you've buried your competitors. Until that other company admits defeat: Make mine DC!

Shane White
Rte. #2, Box 291
Norfolk, NY 13669

P.S. David Mazzucchelli has improved greatly. He's beyond control, don't stop him now!

Shane? What other company? There's another company? Naaaah...

*****

Dear Denny and Barbara,

After a second critical reading of BATMAN #406, I can only say—brilliant! I mean, I honestly looked for flaws throughout the text (with eyes well-honed from over 20 years of comics reading), and came away with nothing but the utmost respect for the entire creative team.

Perhaps not enough has been said about the art of David Mazzucchelli. I find it to be wonderful; simple in style, but full of the fine visual details that lend realism to the story. Speaking of details, I would be remiss not to mention the contribution of Richmond Lewis and Todd Klein: outstanding work, producing finished pages that are a joy to behold.

Have I left anyone out? Only three of the greatest talents ever to have touched the Batman mythos: Bob Kane, Frank Miller and some guy named O'Neil.

If BATMAN gets any better, they'll have to check me into Arkham!

Don't you guys ever quit?

(still) Bat-Happy
bob Craig
588 Washburn St.
Lockport, NY 14094

*****

Dear Bat-People,
(Especially you, Frank and Denny)

I have a small bone to pick with you about BATMAN #406. Specifically the third panel of page 16 where it says:

"...every member of Brandon's team, every cop, and everybody in the crowd were vaccinated against rabies for their bat bites. Never have so many had so much trouble sitting down."

Those people should have been complaining about belly aches. The standard treatment for rabies consists of a series of shots of the rabies anti-toxin injected into the abdomen. As a comic book fan, and hopefully, a future artist and writer, I like to pay close attention to detail.

Please don't get me wrong. Aside from this small portion, I have no complaints about the YEAR ONE series. It's one of the finest series I've ever had the pleasure of reading. The art is magnificent. Batman looks much more realistic, more like an athletic man in a tight costume than Mr. Universe with his skin painted gray. Thank you Frank, David and everyone else responsible.

Leonard Kirk
21 Wiley St.
St. Catherines, Ontario
CANADA L2R 4E6

P.S. Thanks for deciding to 86 the yellow background on Batman's emblem.

Well, I guess we gave away the big secret that Frank, David and Denny have never had rabies...

Hope you enjoyed this look at Mr. Cockrum's first outing with the Batman, and we'll see you next month. Until then, so long and don't forget: when those bats start swooping low, dive under cover and avoid lots of shots, O.K.?

—Barbara

FROM THE DEN

E. Nelson Bridwell will be eulogized elsewhere, of course, but I think he would like to be remembered here, in a comic book.

Nelson was, after all, one of the world's greatest authorities on the American comic book—maybe *the* greatest. He was the man you saw when you had a question about continuity, personnel, history—anything that concerned this narrative form. Whenever I got a job that required my writing about comics, he was the first person I thought of, the first person I called when I got stuck. I never had to make a second call. If the information existed, Nelson had it. And he was willing to share it, without reward, without even acknowledgement. He was as generous with his time and his expertise as anyone I ever met.

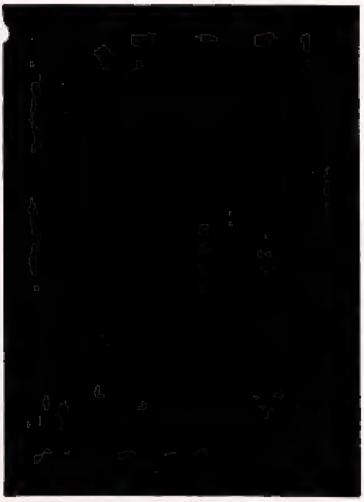
A lot of people knew that Nelson was a virtual walking encyclopedia of comics lore. But not many knew that he was almost as knowledgeable concerning Shakespeare, the Bible and mythology. He had more than a casual acquaintance with classic literature, movies, the pulps. I suspect that Nelson knew many more things that I simply never had occasion to discuss with him.

He was also kind and extraordinarily decent. I knew him for nearly 20 years and in all that time I never heard him malign anyone—not because he had no reason to. He was sometimes taken for granted, sometimes badly treated, both by people he worked for and by nature itself. His health was never good, and he was in and out of hospitals frequently. But he had a rare and wonderful kind of courage, accepting suffering and injustice without bitterness, without complaint or self-pity. He made the best of what he had and lived the best life he could.

He's gone now. He died in January of lung cancer. It was a nastily ironic death because he was not a smoker and, in fact, had no bad habits at all. I'll miss him. But I won't forget him and I hope I'll be able to follow his example. If I can, I'll be a better man.

DENNY

MEANWHILE...



E. Nelson Bridwell passed away on January 23, 1987, and it's going to be hard to imagine DC Comics without him.

He was here before I was, working as an assistant to editor Mort Weisinger on the SUPERMAN titles. It's hard to imagine someone better suited to the task. Mort was creating a mythology and background for Superman like no one has done previously or since. It was Nelson's Herculean job to keep track of it.

He knew everything. Everything. The entire Kryptonian family tree. Every character whose full name had a double "L." Clark Kent's social security number. Once, for a special project, I asked Nelson how many moons the planet Krypton had. He answered with another question, "You mean originally, or when it exploded?" He went on to tell me with great authority the fates of each of that planet's satellites.

He took a special pride in that kind of knowledge. It was not trivia to him. He was the guardian of a very special legend, a new American fable, and he knew it. He took his work seriously.

Nelson loved comics. I'm giving away no secret by telling you that. Besides Superman, he was especially fond of the original Captain Marvel; the old ECs, to which he wrote in many a letter of comment; and in particular, the work of Walt Kelly. He hunted down Kelly's stuff whenever and wherever he could. I remember his joy when he showed me something he'd just picked up at a comics convention: Walt Kelly's first published comics work. It was in a DC comic, no less. I didn't know that.

I may be giving you the impression that comics were Nelson's only area of expertise. Far from it. He was well-read, and if there was something he didn't know, he taught himself with great verve and enthusiasm. He made himself into an expert in every field of literature he read. Shakespeare plays. The pulps. The Oz books. Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Once, I saw him and Julie Schwartz putting their heads together to come up with a title for a story. "How does that old saying go again?" Julie asked. "Is it, 'When a body meets a body...'?"

Nelson replied, "Julie, the original line is 'Gin a body meet a body...'" and went on to quote the rest of the Robert Burns poem from memory. I couldn't believe what I was hearing, so later, I looked it up myself. He didn't miss a word.

Naturally, Nelson's interest in the field was not limited to other people's work. He was quite a scripter in his own right. I had the pleasure of working with him on a DC series called THE SECRET SIX, wherein a group of adventurers were forced to take orders from a mysterious commander named Mockingbird. The twist was that Mockingbird was in reality one of the six. We never revealed just who. I enjoyed those plotting sessions, they were good times. It's to Nelson's credit that the series is still remembered fondly. (And yes, I do know who Mockingbird is. There are no secrets from editors.)

He also created THE INFERIOR FIVE, a parody book that took apart all the cliches and conventions of super-hero stories. If memory serves, it was the first book devoted to super-hero satire on a regular basis. Quite a groundbreaker, considering how many are on the stands these days.

One more story. As you know, Superman's fiftieth birthday is coming up, so I've had to field a lot of questions about The Man of Steel. And just as often, I'm completely stumped.

Just this morning, someone asked me about the status of an old Superman villain; where he came from, and what his last appearance was. My first impulse was to pick up the phone and ask Nelson.

Nelson really was invaluable ... to me, to DC, to the other editors, and mostly, to fans, whose passion for comics he shared, and who will recall his work with affection.

We miss you, Nelson.

—Dick Giordano